

While the Bangor Public Library was closed and we were all encouraged to remain in our homes, I found I was easily entertained by a Baltimore Oriole also known as a Northern Oriole. I live in the heavily wooded western side of Corinth, Maine. I have a large open yard surrounded by very tall trees. The oriole found I had placed the large lid of a jar on my back deck filled with fruit cocktail and jelly. As I watched him approach for the first time, he accidentally knocked it over onto the deck's floor. He easily hopped down and began eating, the start of a month-long relationship.

I discovered that using two old glass fruit cups for the fruit cocktail and grape jelly for one and a slice of orange with a 1/2 cherry in the center of the other was a colorful attraction for the oriole and also a mockingbird. Soon as I glassed the trees next to my house I discovered the oriole was building a web-like nest which hung on the end of a branch of the tall tree. The nest was at least 30 feet off the ground. The female spent several days stitching branches, and leaves securely to withstand windy and wet conditions.

Every morning the oriole would call out, waiting for me to produce the two glass containers for their consumption, especially the grape jelly. They soon welcomed the baby birds as they hatched and were getting anxious to fly. I worried how they could start out so high, but one day as I watched with my binoculars, the parent encouraged them to walk out of the nest and up the branches of the large trees where they flitted all around for several hours before taking the big first flight! They did hang around for a while, but the parents never brought them back to the fruit I still offered. I stopped putting out the food when the only consumers were wasps, bees and ants. On top of all the excitement of having those bright beautiful birds visiting our deck we also had two bluebird families and tree swallows.

We have the constant company of hummingbirds which I had been taking for granted with all the excitement. Our extended property also supports Ruffed grouse, American bittern, Northern flicker and Woodcock, and many more. So when I was forced to stay home, it was with a pair of binoculars in one hand and a bird book in the other. I'm glad I am able to now take out books from the Bangor Library, but my days at home forced me to enjoy all the wildlife I had right in my own backyard.

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